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Pre-school and elementary school pre-service teachers' learning outcomes for music

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess pre-service and elementary school teachers' perceptions about learning outcomes of music instruction that they got during their course work over two semesters. Sixteen criteria for elementary pre-service teachers' learning outcomes developed by European Association of Music Educators were modified as likert scale. The scale was applied to 114 students from elementary and pre-school teacher department of Akdeniz University. It was seen that the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was ,908. In order to define the students' self opinions about meeting the criterias, frequency and Mean was used. According to the results of the study, pre-service teachers believe that they are quite sufficient to manage and facilitate singing and other kinds of musical performances, select imaginative and appropriate materials and frameworks, motivate and facilitate the musical creativity of learners, make learners enable to share their musical experiences, use current media (including ICT) and to enrich the learners' life inside and outside of the school.

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1. Introduction

It is known that due to various reasons, preschool and primary school teachers give music lessons, preschools and in the first years of the primary schools. When it is considered that music education received especially in the early age has an effect on improvement of skills such as intelligence, language, creativity, communication (Chi et al., 2003 ; Rauscher et al., 1997; Schellenberg et al., 2004; MacDonald and Miell, 2000) not only music lessons given in the preschool and primary school teaching departments but also providing teacher candidates with the skills in the field. There are various factors that affect in what ways and to what extent music is included in the curriculum of the primary schools. The most important factor is teachers' questioning their own musical skills and their beliefs concerning the necessity of the music (Apfelstadt, 1989; Barry, 1992).

Teachers giving music lessons but not being a music teacher are aware of the importance of the music education for children and believe the necessity of having a musical background. (Barış and Özata, 2009; Hash, 2009); however, they do not consider themselves qualified enough to give music lessons. Many researches revealed that teachers who give music lessons but not being a music teacher feel uncomfortable while giving music lessons. (Hennessy 2000, 2001; Holden and Button 2006; Seddon and Biasutti, 2008; Hash, 2009). Byo (1999) observed that classroom teachers do not feel as responsible as an expert teacher while giving music lesson about the objectives of the curriculum. In their study aiming at revealing the use of musical activities in primary school lessons, Frego and

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Giles (2004) had meetings with teachers. The meetings disclosed that 70 % of the teachers stated that they use music less than 15 minutes in a week while 89 % of them said that they do not feel a specific responsibility to reach musical targets. In his study about the effects of teachers' receptions concerning their own music skills on their attitudes towards teaching music, Bresler (1993) ascertained that teachers have little musical knowledge and that they think the music education they receive during university is unnecessary in that time and that this situation is reflected on the class environment and that they find themselves inadequate for musical activities.

These similar problems that teachers come across in various countries put forward that there should be reconstruction in music teaching programs they receive in the university. In that point, learning outcomes have leading role in development studies. According to Hennessy and others (2009), learning outcomes will simplify the program development studies much in the institutions training teacher. Learning outcomes give information about which skills and competencies can be reached at the end of a lesson, instead of defining the content of the curriculum. In that respect, it can be said that learning outcomes are supportive power to make renovation in the curriculum, besides being guide or compulsory policy for training teacher (Hennessy and others 2009).

Learning outcomes have an important place in the Bologna process, a reform process aiming to create higher education area in Europe. In the Bologna process, many objectives such as creating comparable diploma and degree, providing students and instructors with mobility and prevalence in Europe have been identified. Another objective is the implementation of European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS is a system that has been developed with the intention of providing solutions for recognition of the education the students receive in different higher education institutions by the other higher education institutions in Europe. In a credit system based on ECTS, learning outcomes and competencies need to be identified, along with the objectives of the curriculum. In the report submitted in Bologna process, Adam (2004) points out that the term of "learning outcome" has not been conclusively defined and that there are similarities among the definitions asserted in many conferences and meetings about education field. Adam defines learning outcome as:

"...precise statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate at the end of a period of learning involving the exact identification of the skills and abilities that a student will have on the successful completion of a module/unit and/or complete qualification."

Most of the time, learning outcomes and objectives are being confused. Most people think that learning outcomes and objectives are the same things and the words used in both of them are synonym; however, objective behaviors are teacher centered while learning outcomes are student centered (Adam, 2004). Studies conducted in various schools revealed that classroom and preschool teachers experience difficulty in giving music lesson which has been proved to have effect on academic achievement. The studies and the meetings about the importance of the music on education unveiled that the problems of these teachers have not been discussed much. According to Hennessy et al (2009), music lessons are included in the classroom teaching departments in many countries. More research needs to be done to determine the required qualifications in music teaching. There is also a necessity to identify the qualifications and learning outcomes concerning the music lessons students have during their university education so that classroom teacher candidates can determine objectives for music classes and can give music lessons efficiently. Due to the reasons stated above, this research includes the views of preschool and classroom teachers on learning outcomes concerning music teaching.

2. Method

The research is a descriptive study. In this sense, 16 criteria concerning musical learning outcomes the teachers who are not music teachers but are in a position to be obliged to give music lessons needs to have, were translated from English to Turkish in 18. European Association for Music in Schools Congress and they were made as scale items. The scale was examined by a linguistic expert and was made ready to put into practice. The items prepared were tested on 114 students who had music education for 1 year in Mediterranean University Education Faculty and Classroom and Preschool Teaching Department. It was observed that the Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient of the scale is 908. The implementation of the scale lasted 15-20 minutes. For data solution, frequency and percentage were used to reveal and describe the views of the students about acquiring the determined criteria.

3. Results

Table 1. The Views of the Teacher Candidates on the Level of Acquiring Learning Outcomes (%)

	5	4	3	2	1
I am able to express my personal values regarding music and music education which can inspire and contribute to my professional development	10,2	38	38,9	9,3	3,7
I possess basic skills and knowledge in singing and other kinds of music making which can be used in communicative ways and awareness of different learning contexts in the classroom	12	44,4	35,2	7,4	9
I am able to manage and facilitate singing and other kinds of music making in the classroom for groups and whole class-using a variety of musical and non musical starting points and frameworks	16,7	50,9	29,6	2,8	0
I have acquired knowledge of musical styles, genres and traditions relevant to learners' interests and which reflect both curriculum requirements and the larger sphere of musical practices in society.	1,9	26,9	54,6	15,7	9
I have strategies to enable learners to be familiar with the basic elements and structures of music and how they interact to communicate and express ideas, moods and feelings	10,2	41,7	40,7	7,4	0
I am able to select imaginative and appropriate materials and frameworks to stimulate and support a wide range of approaches to musical learning	19,4	54,6	20,4	5,6	0
I can motivate and facilitate the musical creativity of learners, and support the skills and confidence to express and communicate their ideas	32,4	50,9	16,7	0	0
I know about different approaches to listening and perceiving music and can motivate learners to explore and develop these.	16,7	42,6	34,3	6,5	0

5: Completely suitable. 4: suitable, 3: a little suitable, 2: unsuitable, 1: definitely not suitable

Considering Table 1, it can be observed that teacher candidates mostly replied in the affirmative to the statements about musical learning outcomes.

While 38,9 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I am able to express my personal values regarding music and music education which can inspire and contribute to my professional development” as “a little suitable”, 38 % of them replied as “suitable”. It was also observed that 44,4 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I possess basic skills and knowledge in singing and other kinds of music making which can be used in communicative ways and awareness of different learning contexts in the classroom” as “suitable” and 35,2 % replied as “a little suitable”. 50,9 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I am able to manage and facilitate singing and other kinds of music making in the classroom for groups and whole class-using a variety of musical and non musical starting points and frameworks” as “suitable”.

54,6 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I have acquired knowledge of musical styles, genres and traditions relevant to learners' interests and which reflect both curriculum requirements and the larger sphere of musical practices in society.” as “a little suitable.” 41,7 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I have strategies to enable learners to be familiar with the basic elements and structures of music and how they interact to communicate and express ideas, moods and feelings” as “suitable” while 40,7% replied as “a little suitable”. 54,6 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I am able to select imaginative and appropriate materials and frameworks to stimulate and support a wide range of approaches to musical learning” as “suitable”. 50,9 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I can motivate and facilitate the musical creativity of learners, and support the skills and confidence to express and communicate their ideas” as “suitable” and 32,4 % of them replied as “completely suitable”. 42,6 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I know about different approaches to listening and perceiving music and can motivate learners to explore and develop these” as “suitable” and 34,3 % of them replied as “a little suitable”.

	5	4	3	2	1
I enable learners to share their musical experiences and value the music they make and listen to	38,9	53,7	7,4	0	0
I am familiar with and can use current media which are suitable for use in the classroom and support music learning	33,3	52,8	12,0	1,9	0
I can plan for the inclusion of music in cross curricular and interdisciplinary contexts and can use music in flexible and enriching ways to enhance the enjoyment and quality of learning	24,1	50,0	23,1	2,8	0
I appreciate the role and importance of music in young people's lives and their cultural environments and find appropriate ways to respond to their musical interests in classroom activities	18,5	55,6	23,1	2,8	0
I know where and how to access specialist advice and support for learners to orientate themselves in the field of music, and to enable them to pursue their own musical interests and goals	14,8	37,0	42,6	5,6	0
I know how to access external expertise to support learning and to extend and diversify the artistic and cultural activities offered to learners	16,7	38,9	38,0	6,5	0
I find ways to enable learners, through musical activities, to contribute to and enrich the life of the school and the wider community	15,7	58,3	25,0	0,9	0
I know how music can be used to support the development of language and other fundamental skills as well as the social, emotional and physical well being of learners	18,5	52,8	26,9	1,9	0

5: Completely suitable. 4: suitable, 3: a little suitable, 2: unsuitable, 1: definitely not suitable

Considering Table 2, it can be observed that teacher candidates mostly replied in the affirmative to the statements about musical learning outcomes just like in Table 1.

53,7 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I enable learners to share their musical experiences and value the music they make and listen to” as “suitable”, while 38,9 % of them replied as “*completely suitable*”. 52,8 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I am familiar with and can use current media which are suitable for use in the classroom and support music learning” as “*suitable*”, while 33,3 % of them replied as “*completely suitable*”. 50 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I can plan for the inclusion of music in cross curricular and interdisciplinary contexts and can use music in flexible and enriching ways to enhance the enjoyment and quality of learning” as “*suitable*”. 55,6 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I appreciate the role and importance of music in young people's lives and their cultural environments and find appropriate ways to respond to their musical interests in classroom activities” as “*suitable*”. 42,6 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I know where and how to access specialist advice and support for learners to orientate themselves in the field of music, and to enable them to pursue their own musical interests and goals” as “*a little suitable*” while 37,0 % of them replied as “*suitable*”. 38,9 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I know how to access external expertise to support learning and to extend and diversify the artistic and cultural activities offered to learners” as “*suitable*”, while 38 % of them replied as “*a little suitable*”. 58,3 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I find ways to enable learners, through musical activities, to contribute to and enrich the life of the school and the wider community” as “*suitable*”. 52,8 % of the teacher candidates replied to the statement “I know how music can be used to support the development of language and other fundamental skills as well as the social, emotional and physical well being of learners” as “*suitable*”.

4. Discussion

According to the results, it was revealed that teacher candidates mostly replied in the affirmative to the statements about the level of acquiring musical learning outcomes of classroom and pre-school teacher candidates. Students did not reply to most of the items as “definitely not suitable”. Music education of the classroom and pre-school teacher candidates in undergraduate period is limited to 2 semesters in Turkey. Within the body of the department where research is conducted, as for musical context, first semester includes solfege, note reading, block flute education while second semester includes singing teaching method knowledge rhythm and singing teaching practices.

Considering the weighted answers, it can be observed that the versatile structure of the undergraduate period classroom and pre-school teaching programs affects teacher candidates' views about music teaching outcomes. For example, that most of the teacher candidates replied in the affirmative to the statement "I am familiar with and can use current media which are suitable for use in the classroom and support music learning" can be considered positive effect of the instructional technologies and material design in the curriculum. Positive reply to another statement "I can motivate and facilitate the musical creativity of learners, and support the skills and confidence to express and communicate their ideas" reveals that this is a positive effect of the lessons concerning creativity of the pre-school teaching curriculum. As a result, it can be concluded that versatile education concept supports other fields and teacher candidates have positive attitude towards using their knowledge in a field in another field. As a supportive statement to the conclusion above, teacher candidates replied to the statement starting as "I can plan for the inclusion of music in cross curricular and interdisciplinary contexts and can use music in flexible and enriching ways to enhance the enjoyment and quality of learning". From another point, most of the students consider themselves sufficient with the learning outcomes, maybe do not believe the importance of music in the curriculum and as they consider music less important, this may make them not worry about performing the learning outcomes. In some studies, it has been put forwarded that classroom teachers and classroom teacher candidates having experience believe that music has a valuable position in the curriculum (Berke&Colwell,2004;Giles&Frego,2004) but it is not as important as the other lessons (Abril & Gault, 2005;Hash,2009). Moreover, that student's reply in the affirmative generally may result from the fact that they have not start teaching yet.

Another important finding of the research is that teacher candidates replied mostly to the statement concerning professional advice and support for music teaching as "a little suitable". It can be considered that this situation, the absence of the music teaching department in the within the Education Faculty of the mentioned University may result from teacher candidates' weakening relationship with branch teaching. This result does not mean that teacher candidates will not cooperate with music teachers when they start their profession.

As a result, when the concerning literature is examined, it is understood that teachers giving music lessons but not being music teachers feel insufficient, ineffective and uncomfortable most of the time. (Hennessy 2000, 200; Holden and Button 2006;Seddon and Biasutti, 2008; Hash, 2009; Frego and Giles, 2004; Bresler 1993). However, when study results are examined, it has been observed that pre-school and classroom teacher candidates have positive ideas about learning outcomes towards music teaching. This result can be interpreted as teacher candidates taking sufficient music teaching programs to have their learning outcomes. What is more, the positive contribution of the versatile structure of the existing undergraduate program should not be underestimated. Besides, researches concerning the subject should be focused on and necessary precautions should be taken to improve the existing undergraduate programs efficiency by taking into account the importance of the pre-school and classroom teachers in the primary music education and in early musical improvement of children. In addition to this, in another study, the relationship between learning outcomes and academic success on students' learning music can be examined.

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